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# 2007

Annual review

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Ian Dennis, deputy headteacher of Egglescliffe School in Cleveland has noticed the real benefit of technology in raised levels of attainment:

// Over the last two years the boys have achieved as well as, if not better than, the girls in this school. It's got to be down significantly to the use of ICT in classrooms right across the curriculum //

# 2007

## Becta annual review

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### The Board

Andrew Pinder CBE Chairman

John Roberts CBE

Graham Moore OBE

Ralph Tabberer Department for Education and Skills (DfES) Assessor

Anthony Lilley

Graham Badman

Derek Wise

Rosemary Luckin

Stephen Gill

### Executive team

Stephen Crowne Chief Executive

Ian Adams Executive Director, Partnerships, Commissioning, Marketing and Communications

Alan Cowie Executive Director, Business Delivery and Organisational Development

Stephen Lucey Executive Director, Strategic Technologies

Niel McLean Executive Director, Institutional and Workforce Development

Tony Richardson Executive Director, Strategy and Policy

Jane Williams Executive Director, Further Education, Skills and Regeneration

Pictured above from left to right: Niel McLean, Stephen Lucey, Jane Williams, Ralph Tabberer, Stephen Crowne, Derek Wise, Tony Richardson, Graham Badman, John Roberts, Peter Avis (Board Secretary), Andrew Pinder, Graham Moore, Ian Adams, Alan Cowie. Not pictured: Stephen Gill, Anthony Lilley and Rosemary Luckin.

# Chairman's report

**Andrew Pinder, Chairman of Becta, reports on progress and plans for the coming year**



**By using the latest ICT equipment in our schools, we can be sure that technology will hold no fears for the workers of tomorrow. This has to be good news for UK plc**

Throughout history technology has been the catalyst for change in industry. Whether it was the introduction in 1764 of James Hargreaves' 'Spinning Jenny', the internal combustion engine designed by Karl Benz in 1878 or the arrival of the World Wide Web in 1990, change has been profound and sustained.

New ways of working have been introduced and, in a world where time is often literally money, the emphasis on getting a higher and quicker return from the capital invested is paramount.

If technology can do that for industry, why can't it do the same for education? The answer is, of course, that it can. It just takes the same leadership, drive and enthusiasm for change and the will to harness the opportunities that technology presents.

As Sandy Leitch said in his 2006 report on the global economy and skills, industry demands a skilled, educated and enthusiastic workforce, one that is at home in using the latest technology, and our schools and colleges have a duty to ensure that this demand is met.

By using the latest ICT equipment in our schools, colleges and universities we can be sure that technology will hold no fears for the workers of tomorrow. This has to be good news for UK plc. People already in the workplace need high quality, flexible learning and expert support online to continue to develop their skills throughout their working lives.

Recognising the importance of ICT in learning, Becta has been given a new and extended remit by the DfES. We will provide leadership to the educational and training community in all aspects of the application and embedding of technology in learning. We will take the lead on behalf of government for the co-ordination, development and delivery of the e-strategy.

To help us meet this new challenge, and to add to the existing talent we already have on the Becta Board, three new members, Rosemary Luckin, Derek Wise and Graham Moore were appointed earlier this year. All three have a wealth of experience in the education and training sector and will, I am sure, contribute hugely to our work over the coming months.





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## Taking the lead in a new kind of collaboration

Stephen Crowne, Chief Executive



**Becta's mission is to build  
on the progress that has  
been made, and to  
take technology from  
marginal to mainstream  
to raise standards of  
achievement for all**

We know from the great practice in our best schools and colleges that technology is already being used very effectively at the heart of teaching and learning.

We also know that, although many schools and colleges are using technology well in some areas, only a minority are really bringing it all together in a way that transforms the experience of learners.

My mission, Becta's mission, is to build on the progress that has already been made, and to take technology from marginal to mainstream in our thinking about how to raise standards of achievement for all.

We will show how the right kind of investment, backed by leadership and training to use technology in the most effective ways, can contribute to higher standards, greater access and motivation,

and greater efficiency across the system.

In March this year Becta was given an enhanced remit by the DfES; to lead the co-ordination, development and delivery of the government's strategy to harness the power of technology to help improve education, skills and children's services. A key part of our role is to work closely with the DfES and other partners to ensure that the potential of technology is taken fully into account in developing future policy.

There is increasingly strong evidence to show that, used effectively, technology can help to narrow the gap between the highest and lowest achievers, can help more people to continue successfully in learning; and can motivate and support those who are disaffected and disengaged.

We know that only around 20 per cent of schools and colleges are getting the full benefits of technology. The challenge for Becta, and the whole system, is to increase that number to 80 per cent by 2011.

Virtually all schools now have networks and broadband connectivity that enable pupils and teachers to reach a wide and growing range of information and resources within and beyond the school. The challenge now is to improve the quality and relevance of learning resources, and tools for communication and management, and to help practitioners to use those confidently and effectively.

We plan to deliver on the government's expectation that by 2008 every pupil should have access to a personalised online learning space with the potential to support an e-portfolio. We plan to ensure that by 2010 every school has a

high quality, integrated learning and management system.

To achieve these challenging goals, we must do three things really well. First, to work with the technology industry and the education and training system to ensure that we have the right technology, connectivity, content and managed services in place right across the system to enable and support learning wherever and whenever it takes place.

Second, to challenge and support schools, colleges, universities and training providers, to ensure everyone in the education and training workforce is capable and confident in using technology effectively to achieve better results for learners.

And third, to find much better ways of identifying and spreading the most effective practice, so that every learner can benefit.

Becta is leading a new kind of collaboration between government, the supporting agencies, local authorities (LAs), industry and front-line leaders and practitioners. There is great practice right across the country, but too much of it is isolated and there is too much re-inventing of the wheel. We need to find better ways of helping practitioners learn from each other, driven by the needs of learners and led by the most effective leaders in the country.

We have all seen the power that technology has to transform whole areas of modern life. It is absolutely central to the lives of younger generations. I want to harness that power to improve the life chances of all of our learners. As we understand more about how technology can enhance education, we owe it to our learners, and the country, to make the best use of it.



## Raising attainment at Eggescliffe School

Pupils and teachers at Eggescliffe School in Cleveland are reaping the benefits of the school's investment in technology. Every department has developed the use of ICT to meet its learning and teaching needs.

To make sure that the teachers are able to take full advantage of the technology at their disposal, they all have access to a personal laptop computer.

And the benefits are being felt outside the school gates. The introduction of the school's learning platform – a web-based system, accessible by staff and students onsite and offsite – has transformed the teacher-learner relationship, allowing greater communication and feedback about learning between teacher and student.

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### 2007–08 objectives

During the coming year Becta will:

**put the education and skills system on the way towards universal access to learning through technology by:**

- 3,000 (88%) secondary schools and 8,700 (50%) primary schools providing access to a personal online learning space
- an additional 50,000 targeted 'homes' having access to learning resources

**make ours the safest online environment for children and learners in the world by:**

- all local safeguarding children's boards having a plan in place that covers e-safety

**ensure that nearly all schools have improved their use of technology by:**

- all secondary schools being ready to use technology to provide 'real-time reporting to parents' from September 2008
- 14,700 (66%) schools using Becta's self-review framework and 7,350 (50%) of these schools progressing through the framework
- increasing the percentage of teachers who use digital learning resources created by others from 178,000 (39%) to 205,400 (45%)
- 70 (33%) support providers adopting new common standards and principles for delivering support for transformational change

**be on the way to doubling the number of teachers using technology to support personalisation by:**

- increasing the numbers of teachers who can exploit technology to



Students have become increasingly confident in using the technology for a broad range of learning activities, such as research, communicating with peers and teachers, creating web-based resources, interacting with virtual environments in lessons and designing and giving presentations.

One Year 8 student said, "I never really used computers until I came here, but I find myself quite addicted now. It's really good and it does help."

The real benefit, though, has been seen through raised levels of attainment, and the use of ICT has enabled boys to catch up with girls, who outperformed them over recent years. "Over the last two years the boys have achieved as well as, if not better than the girls in this school. It's got to be down significantly to the use of ICT in classrooms right across the curriculum," said Ian Dennis, deputy headteacher of the school.

Technology at the school is also allowing teachers to respond to the different learning needs of individual students and offer personalised learning experiences. The learning platform provided an opportunity for teachers to have regular, ongoing and one-to-one dialogues with students and to respond to them as individuals taking into account their personal learning needs and styles.

Teachers at the school have benefited, and their confidence in the use of technology has grown as they have been encouraged and supported to develop ICT use at a pace appropriate to them. "There has been a massive impact on the way that staff work and teach in school," according to Ian Dennis.

Egglescliffe School was a runner-up in Becta's 2006 ICT Excellence Awards.

personalise learning from 31,000 (14%) to 42,000 (19%) in primary and 17,000 (7%) to 23,000 (10%) in secondary schools

- increasing the numbers of teachers who use technology to support assessment from 18,000 (8%) to 25,000 (11%) in primary and 58,000 (25%) to 77,000 (33%) in secondary schools

#### **save the education system £100m over three years by:**

- saving the education system £85m over three years to March 2008 and a further £30m savings secured for 2008–9 in committed contracts
- the adoption of Becta-endorsed standards by all major building investment programmes

#### **secure better technology-informed policy and strategy by:**

- nine of our top ten partners agreeing accountability for the e-strategy
- 80% of partners and targeted policy makers using Becta's evidence
- technology for learning being fully integrated across the DfES five-year strategy

#### **establish Becta as a credible, national partner within the further education and skills sector by:**

- the top five further education and skills partners committing to the Becta implementation plan to deliver the e-strategy for FE and skills

#### **support these by a series of marketing and communications campaigns that:**

- lead to 70% of key stakeholders agreeing that Becta has a positive impact on them in their delivery of the e-strategy



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## The technology genie is out of the jam jar

**Tony Richardson,**  
Executive Director, Strategy and Policy



**In this country children and young adults are achieving things through technology that were unimaginable even five years ago**

There are schools and colleges in this country where children and adults are achieving things through technology that were unimaginable even five years ago. But there are not enough of them.

The government's e-strategy is all about making this happen more often in more classrooms and learning centres across the country, through high-quality learning and engagement supported by technology.

As part of this aim, Becta has recently undergone a major shift in responsibility, moving from an organisation focused purely on programme delivery, to one that is leading the development and co-ordination of the government's e-strategy across the country.

Over recent months, we have been working to create the right policy, funding and regulatory environment to

In a classroom in Northamptonshire a group of pupils are growing a bean in a jam jar. They film the shoot and roots emerging from the bean using a webcam and a piece of free software that enables them to take time-lapse photography. Guided by the teacher's skilful questioning, the pupils examine the digital images, carry out microscopic analysis of the bean's cell structure, conduct a number of practical experiments and solve problems in groups.

By the time they have finished the activity, they have gained a sound understanding of the complex bio-chemical processes involved, to a level that would have been impossible without the technology.

And the remarkable thing is that these pupils are just six years old.

make the e-strategy happen, by shaping policy decisions and ensuring that we have the appropriate plans, processes and partnership arrangements in place.

A significant achievement for Becta has been to turn our new strategic remit into a practical delivery plan that sets out how we will co-ordinate and lead the delivery of the government's e-strategy. This includes detailed roles and responsibilities for our various partners, such as the government and its agencies, intermediary bodies working regionally and locally, the commercial sector and the front-line education workforce.

To support the roll out of the delivery plan, we launched a national communication campaign that is opening up a dialogue with key partners, stakeholders and influencers on the challenges ahead. In November 2006, we invited 550 leading

figures within education and industry to a national conference, where we looked at ways of expanding effective practice across the country.

Following on from this, a series of regional events kicked off in March 2007, aimed at taking key messages from the conference to leaders within schools, colleges, local authorities and work-based learning providers.

At a national level, Becta has been working closely with senior figures for policy development within the DfES, so that our organisation can be placed much more at the forefront of policy making.

We have also been developing new partnership arrangements with intermediary agencies in the schools and further education and skills sectors to ensure that they, too, are committed to the government's e-strategy and are

building the use of technology into their plans from the outset.

For example, the National College for School Leadership is working with us to ensure that every headteacher in the country will understand the power and potential of technology, and that this will be a central component of training programmes and national standards.

Similarly in the further education and skills sector, the Centre for Excellence in Leadership is working with us to ensure that leaders and senior managers fully appreciate the benefits of technology, how this will benefit the reform of FE and Skills, and that this will be a central component of their training and leadership programmes.

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority is working with us on how the use of technology can be embedded in the assessment system.

The Training and Development Agency for Schools, the commissioning body that funds university and school-based training for teachers, is creating a framework whereby every new teacher and higher level teaching assistant will have to demonstrate an understanding of the use of technology as a tool for learning.

**The challenge now is to create a world where every child, young person and adult has the chance to learn through modern technology however and whenever it is appropriate**

And the Quality Improvement Agency now hosts Becta's advice and guidance on its new Excellence Gateway.

These, and many other initiatives, over the last 15 months have put Becta – and the technology agenda – at the forefront of policy making at the design stage. As a result, consideration is now being given to the role that technology will play in transforming the opportunities for, and achievements of, learners in the future.

We've taken government policy and turned it into a real strategy for change, supported by a focused and practical delivery plan.

We have partners in place who are committed to helping us deliver that plan, and senior policy figures within the DfES who understand that there is an important leadership role for Becta in bringing technology to bear on the improvement of delivery, access and outcomes for learners.

Finally, we have started a dialogue with practitioners on the front line of education and within the industry about how we can better spread practices across all institutions.

There is still a huge amount to do, but this year we have taken great strides towards repositioning Becta as a much more important figure in the whole policy making arena.

The challenge now, working alongside our partners, is to create a world where every child, young person and adult has the chance to learn through modern technology however and whenever it is appropriate – in schools, at home, at college or in the workplace.

And in so doing, we will use technology to make this learning a thoroughly enjoyable, exciting and engaging experience.



# Building a national digital infrastructure

Stephen Lucey, Executive Director,  
Strategic Technologies



**These standards offer a blueprint for a school's procurement decision making, something that will help them to specify their requirement, avoid costly mistakes and ensure that suppliers come up with solutions that truly meet their needs**

Over the last 15 months, Becta has been putting in place key elements in the 'national digital infrastructure' – the framework that will support the provision of appropriate ICT products, services and resources that schools and colleges really value and are prepared to buy.

Working with our partners, we are ensuring that schools have the appropriate underpinning technology in place and are benefiting from substantial savings, higher quality service provision, more reliable solutions and excellent value for money across the sector.

We also recognise that schools control their own ICT spending these days. Striking the right balance between establishing a coherent technological platform nationally, while nonetheless giving schools the flexibility to develop their own, local solutions, can be very challenging.

However, our track record has shown that, when people do buy collaboratively through national procurement agreements, they can reap huge rewards while retaining control over investment decisions.

As a first step towards making the national digital infrastructure a reality, Becta has undertaken a great deal of work to define the technology that

schools should be buying in the first place. The result is a rigorous set of standards and specifications setting out what schools and local authorities (LAs) should expect from a particular piece of technology, in terms that are easy for everyone to understand.

These standards are not mandatory. Rather, they offer a blueprint for a school's procurement decision making, something that will help them to specify their requirement, avoid costly mistakes and ensure that suppliers come up with solutions that truly meet their needs.

Alongside this, we have also negotiated a series of national procurement agreements with agencies and suppliers to ensure that schools and colleges get the best deal when purchasing equipment, software, consultancy and support.

A key feature of these agreements is to use the collective buying power of schools, colleges and LAs to drive down the cost of ICT products and support services throughout the supply chain, while delivering better quality, service provision and value for money at the sharp end.

As a result of our efforts on both fronts, there are now appropriate standards and agreements in place covering infrastructure



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services – not just the boxes of equipment, but everything inside a school from networks, PCs and laptops to full design, installation and maintenance services.

Similarly, standards and agreements have been established for critical learning platform software and services, supporting the way the curriculum is managed and providing access to educational content, collaboration tools, assessment and marking systems.

On connectivity, Becta has been working closely with bodies such as the regional broadband consortia (RBCs) to raise the quality and availability of provision, but also to promote the accreditation of broadband services in relation to Internet safety. To this end, we have seen a significant increase in the number of RBCs and LAs achieving Becta's quality standards for Internet safety in recent months.

Finally, Becta has been at the forefront of important developments in data services and the way that information such as pupil records and assessment is managed and updated within schools.

In June 2005, we undertook a major review of whether the educational sector was getting value for money from its significant investment in management information systems (MIS).

Following our report, we established a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the DfES and school MIS suppliers governing how changes are implemented to the information system. This MoU ensures that changes can be managed effectively and that adequate time is given for those changes to be processed. As a result, schools should enjoy much higher reliability in the MIS software they receive from suppliers in the future.

Over £80m has been spent on interactive whiteboards for schools. Buying this equipment collaboratively has yielded savings of over £29m

234,000 laptops were bought through the Laptops for Teachers scheme, with savings of £43 million. This money has been ploughed back into schools, resulting in an additional 48,582 laptops that are now available for use by the nation's teachers

Elsewhere in the June 2005 report, we highlighted the fact that schools had a number of different products within the MIS system that did not link effectively together, meaning that staff often had to input the same pieces of information a number of different times.

In response, we are establishing supplier-independent interoperability standards to make sure that systems talk to each other and that data can move seamlessly between them.

Looking ahead, schools are at the very start of the adoption process for the changes we have made, but they are already benefiting from the considerable savings that can be achieved when technology is bought and used appropriately.

Our challenge now is to identify organisations that will act as 'aggregators' for schools and colleges – specialists who can talk to

them, put together their joint requirements and go to the market to find the best solution at the right price using the appropriate procurement agreement.

These 'aggregators' will play a key role in ensuring the successful implementation of the national digital infrastructure and its ongoing operation. Becta, meanwhile, will be there to provide support to the sector, will manage the procurement agreements throughout their life and will deal with any concerns about the performance of participating suppliers if and when they occur.

As part of this, we will continue to promote the Becta supplier mark, a national quality mark that stands as an important indication of supplier performance. In recent months, we have seen the mark become more trusted by schools, to the point where many will only work with suppliers that have achieved it.

Across all these areas, Becta is here to take the technology burden away from schools, so that they can concentrate on the vital task of using technology to improve educational outcomes for learners.

Our ultimate goal is to create a sector where every school, college and training provider in the country, irrespective of size or location, is benefiting from the savings and quality service provision on offer through the national digital infrastructure, and harnessing fully the power of technology in learning.

**A national agreement with Microsoft means that schools can buy products at highly discounted rates through the company's existing reseller network, a deal that has resulted in savings of £60m over four years**

**Having a high level of ICT equipment in a school or college will dramatically improve performance, so long as there is the right technology in place and the leadership and enthusiasm to embrace it**



## Test Bed shows the power of technology

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That's the key conclusion of a four-year study called The ICT Test Bed project, which was set up in 2002 by the DfES, managed by Becta and evaluated by Manchester Metropolitan and Nottingham Trent universities.

The project investigated how the sustained and embedded use of ICT in schools and colleges could improve learner outcomes, classroom practice and institutional development.

It studied 23 primary schools, five secondary schools and three further education colleges in Sandwell, Durham and Barking and Dagenham – areas chosen because of their relative social and economic disadvantage.

Each of the schools and colleges drew up their own plans and were given money to spend over four years to install high levels of hardware and software. The funding also covered training so that the most effective use of the investment could be made.

The results showed that the investment in technology led to rapid improvements in skills in using technology in learning and teaching, and improved management of workload. Also, learning platforms made it easier for teachers to find, store, share, create and re-use resources and lesson plans, ensuring long-term value from the initial investment.

Using technology more effectively produced a fundamental change in the way teachers and other staff worked, with administration and support staff able to take on broader responsibilities. This immediately cut down on the amount of administration that teachers had previously been doing, releasing them to spend more time supporting learning.

The ICT Test Bed project also revealed that:

- as technology was embedded, a school's national test outcomes improved beyond expectations, though the impact of technology on attainment was better in primary schools than secondary schools
- effective use of presentation technologies led to greater levels of interaction between teachers and learners in class
- the effective use of technology enabled a more personalised experience for



pupils by fostering greater choice within the curriculum and more differentiated learning

- technology supported more effective assessment of learning by making it easier for learners to be involved in setting targets and for teachers to give individual feedback
- the use of electronic registration improved attendance levels in some schools by 3 – 4%, while behaviour management systems were reported by teachers to have a positive impact on both behaviour and attendance
- increased e-maturity had a significant impact on each institution's overall performance. By year four of the project all institutions had become more e-mature across a range of dimensions, including curriculum, leadership and management, workforce, linkage within and between institutions, and communication with parents and the community. Their students' performance in national tests improved in parallel.
- The stage of the schools e-maturity at the end of the project was a good predictor of improvement in pupil performance in national tests.

At the start of the project in 2002, the Test Bed primary schools were performing

less well than comparator schools on a range of key performance measures – Key Stage 2 english, mathematics, science and the Average Point Score (APS) per institution.

While collectively the Test Bed and comparator schools showed improvements in average points score, the rate of improvement for Test Bed schools between 2002 and 2006 was higher than that of the comparator schools.

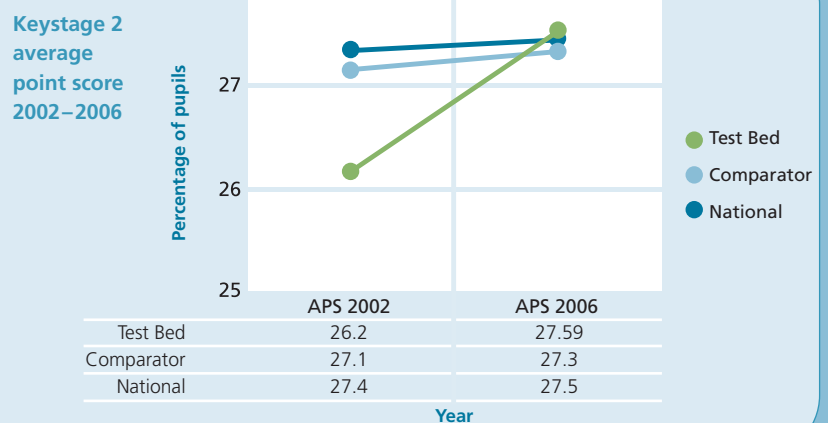
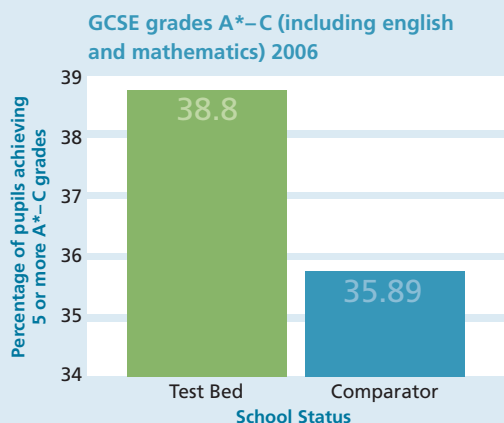
In 2006 significantly more Test Bed pupils achieved 5 or more A\* to C grades, including english and mathematics than those in comparator schools.

Overall, investing wholeheartedly in ICT as part of the Test Bed project allowed schools and colleges to challenge the way they did things across all areas of their activities, helping them to develop and mature.

As the institutions refined their understanding and embedded the technology, they became more efficient and better able to track student progress, which significantly supported the development of teaching and greater personalisation of learning.

More information and a copy of the final report are available on the ICT Test Bed Evaluation website:

[www.evaluation.icctestbed.org.uk](http://www.evaluation.icctestbed.org.uk)





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## Framework for ICT excellence

Niel McLean, Executive Director,  
Institutional and Workforce Development



**Technology is a  
'whole-school' issue that,  
if its power is to be fully  
harnessed, requires a  
sea change in the way  
schools or colleges go  
about their business**

Many issues in schools can be solved by individual teachers working to improve their own practice. For example, a geography teacher can introduce a new way of teaching to improve geography results without the rest of the school needing to change the way it operates.

Technology, however, is different. It's a 'whole-school' issue that, if its power is to be fully harnessed, requires a sea change in the way schools or colleges go about their business.

This is one of the reasons why Becta launched the self-review framework for schools in April 2006. The framework takes schools through a process of self-evaluation, allowing them to assess and benchmark their use of technology across all their activities against a national standard. Ultimately, it raises expectations of what schools could be doing, gives

“ At Northwood, our teachers feel it is important for other schools to appreciate that video-conferencing does not replace good teaching but is a tool to extend this. It adds a different dimension to traditional teaching methods and gives pupils access to a huge variety of different resources and experiences. ”

**Rosie Medhurst is headteacher at Northwood Primary School in Bexley, Kent. Overleaf, Rosie explains that by using ICT equipment she is able to offer her pupils a way to collaborate with other children and subject experts across the curriculum.**

them a set of goals to achieve and helps them plan to reach those goals.

It is powerful because it challenges schools to challenge themselves. By fostering a process of self-review, it provides a structure to help schools drive change internally, rather than having it imposed from outside. It has been developed in partnership with practitioners and all the key educational agencies, and extensively trialled in schools.

Since its launch last year more than 7,500 schools have begun the process, around a third of all schools in the UK. This is an excellent start, especially when you consider that it is an optional programme, and not something that schools have a statutory obligation to undertake.

That said, the take-up has been patchy. In some LAs, as many as 70 per cent of schools have taken part while elsewhere the figure is as low as five per cent.

Becta is now embarking on a programme of engagement with these local authorities, recognising that gaining their support is a critical factor for increasing the take-up of the programme nationally.

Designed to work in tandem with the framework, Becta has launched an accreditation scheme called the ICT Mark.

This is an externally assessed quality mark which determines whether the school has reached a recognised standard of maturity in its use of technology. It is also a formal mechanism for acknowledging success, an important motivational consideration for many people.

Around ten per cent of schools that have used the framework have been awarded the ICT Mark, with many others hoping to receive the award in the near future. And initial research has shown that a school with the ICT Mark is three times

## In touch with the world

Pupils at Northwood Primary School in Bexley are able to communicate via video-conferencing with children in other London schools, and also in schools as far away as China and the USA, as part of their daily lessons. According to headteacher Rosie Medhurst, this has “enabled communication and collaboration in ways we could not have conceived possible!”

The school has seven teachers, all of whom use video-conferencing technology regularly across their classes, benefiting 194 pupils. Through a safe, secure and high-speed broadband connection, innovative usage of video-conferencing sets a clear benchmark for other schools.

Video-conferencing has enabled pupils to build relationships with children in Hong Kong and to learn the martial art of Tai Chi.

Rosie says: “The children’s enthusiasm and dedication from both schools has been

phenomenal, with the Chinese pupils and their parents even coming into school in the evenings to allow for the time difference. To provide these classes with a Tai Chi professional would have been impractical and costly. Through this technology we can offer our pupils a wonderful experience.”

Not content with building links with South East Asia, Northwood pupils have gone west, too. “We have links with primary



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more likely to be judged outstanding or good by an Ofsted inspection in areas such as leadership and management.

To support its operation, Becta worked with NAACE to train 200 external assessors, the people who will ensure that ICT Mark schools are meeting and maintaining the right quality standards.

**Our guiding principle is to encourage schools to protect learners while they are in their care, but also to educate learners so that they know how to be safe when they are away from school**

The Strategic Leadership of ICT (SLICT) programme has gone from strength to strength, with around 1,000 school leaders going through the programme in the last nine months.

The programme was developed and delivered in partnership with the National College of School Leadership and the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust. It is supporting the change process in schools by helping headteachers to think strategically about the adoption of technology. It gives them the tools to address fundamental questions such as what it actually means to be a school today, and how a ‘technologically mature’ school should structure itself in order to best serve learners, staff and parents.

In this way, programmes like SLICT are not about giving teachers and headteachers new ICT and computing skills. They are about



schools across the USA, where children have taught our pupils about the US tradition of Thanksgiving,” said Rosie.

Through the London Grid for Learning’s work with London museums and galleries, Northwood is using video-conferencing to visit places of interest such as The National Maritime Museum and The National Portrait Gallery, which gives them access on a more regular basis than would be possible through school trips.

Rosie says: “The virtual visits to London’s galleries and museums are easy to set up and incredibly beneficial to our pupils. Teachers can connect at a time convenient to them, at no cost, and the pupils benefit from the undivided attention of an expert at the venue.

“We are constantly looking for new ways to use video-conferencing and would encourage other schools to benefit from the experience.”



developing their role as leaders and giving them the capability to drive ongoing change management within their organisations.

Finally, Becta has been playing a central role in the development of workable policies on Internet safety in schools.

Our guiding principle is to encourage schools to protect learners while they are in their care, but also to educate learners so that they know how to be safe when they are away from school.

We want schools to adopt a twin approach, whereby they manage risk through having the right practices and technologies in place, but also encourage the right behaviour among learners, with appropriate safeguards and ongoing monitoring that do not impose a barrier to learning.

To this end, we have been working in partnership with the Home Office and the Child Exploitation and Online Protection

Centre to raise awareness of Internet safety issues, to develop educational materials, to offer advice to schools and colleges on policies for acceptable Internet use and to promote practical measures such as home-school contracts.

Overall, Becta is in the business of driving ‘whole-school change’ through the use of technology, something that is hugely demanding to achieve, given the pressures they are under on so many fronts.

We need to get the message across that reviewing the use of technology can help a school to develop as a whole organisation across a broad spectrum of educational priorities, allowing them to improve their management processes and transform the learning experience for children and young adults.

Driving home that message is a priority for Becta in the coming year.



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## The challenge in further education and skills

Jane Williams, Executive Director,  
Further Education, Skills and Regeneration



**We know that in the best colleges and learning providers we will find fantastic practice to match anything in the world, but we know that it is not universal**

The new remit received from the Secretary of State for Education has a major impact on Becta's work across the further education system.

In the past this sector has not had the same profile within Becta as other parts of the education system. This will change over the coming year. Over the next few months I will be creating a new team, and with the help of all our partners we will be reinvigorating our work in this area.

During the last year we built on the success of the self-review framework for schools, by looking at how a similar system could be implemented in further education colleges.

A tool was developed from the 'bottom up' – by colleges for colleges. Fifteen providers were chosen to ensure a balance in terms of location, technology usage and whether they were a single or multi-site campus.

## E-mentors lead the way

Oaklands College near St Albans has hit upon an innovative way to get the best out of its investment in ICT by 'employing' a small army of e-mentors.

Thirty-five students will be ensuring that learners and lecturers alike are fully up to speed with new equipment and the various learning and teaching aids at their disposal.

"This is a great way of engaging learners and developing our staff," said Mark Dawe, principal at Oaklands. "It could have been quite intimidating for the staff to think that these students were coming in and changing their lives, but they have really embraced the idea. It makes a genuine difference to both learning and teaching."

E-mentors are just one of a number of initiatives introduced recently at the

college to enhance learning through the use of technology, and the effects of these initiatives are clearly visible. In February 2007, for example, less than half the classrooms had an interactive whiteboard. Just three months later, they all had one.

The college, meanwhile, is ensuring that maximum benefit is gained from its investment in ICT, not just by training staff but also by fostering a shift in their mindset and attitudes.

"Some of our staff have taken to using the whiteboards very quickly, while others are progressing more slowly, so we have to use our best lecturers to pull the others along," explained Mark.

"But the benefits from a change in attitude are already clear. We are starting to see improvements in our year-on-year grade attainment, and this improvement has been

These organisations then looked at the development of a framework that would help them build technology and e-learning strategy to underpin their overall aims and objectives, and one that would also develop their technological capacity and capability.

Further development work will take place during 2007, with the participating organisations keeping a diary of improvements that accrue from the system. Independent evaluation is also taking place to enable us to determine its fitness for purpose across the whole system.

And in February this year Becta moved its two websites dedicated to further education and skills to become part of the Quality Improvement Agency's (QIA) new 'Excellence Gateway'.

More than 8,500 learning materials, case studies and information pages continue to be available and updated. Having all of

these valued and quality assured resources stored centrally in one online database means that they are available on-demand to practitioners, managers and learners.

Becta continues to support QIA which has the remit to improve standards of learning, teaching and management across further education. We are pleased to be a partner in the implementation of the National Improvement Strategy and want to ensure that technology is effectively embedded across the whole delivery programme.

And this change makes it clear that technology is increasingly recognised as integral to the drive for quality.

Looking ahead, Becta's new remit and priorities demand that we take a fresh look at how we can best support colleges and training providers to ensure that technology underpins the government's response to the Leitch Report and the

driven by the use of technology throughout the campus.”

And at Oaklands, technology extends further than the lecture rooms, Arsenal Ladies Football Club Academy, who are based at the college, use technology to assess their fitness and performance. The benefits are paying off for them too. The club enjoyed another successful season, winning all three major domestic honours and the UEFA Women’s cup.

Looking ahead, more changes are planned so that the college can fully exploit the opportunities that the investment in ICT is bringing.

A new campus is in the pipeline with a radically different approach to learning spaces. Computer rooms will be a thing of the past, and the whole campus will be covered by wireless technology so that students can connect to the college network from anywhere on the site.

The college also plans to loan a laptop to every full-time student for the duration of their course, while part-time students will have access to a laptop while they are on campus.

This scheme is due to be piloted in the 2007–08 academic year, with the new A-Level students being among the first to take advantage of the arrangement.

Change has been, and will continue to be, a fundamental part of life at Oaklands College as the organisation drives ahead with its ICT strategy. But Mark Dawe has a stark message for anyone who thinks that maintaining the status quo is an option in the modern educational arena:

“At a recent staff meeting I explained to everyone that we had no choice other than to embrace the new technology,” he said. “If we didn’t, they wouldn’t have a job in five years’ time. It wouldn’t be me putting them out of work, it would be the students. They would refuse to be taught in any other way.”

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implementation of the 14–19 reforms. We will also be engaging with Sir George Sweeney’s self-regulation group and other key developments in further education reform.

We know that technology has a key role to play, not only in the delivery of teaching and learning, and raising learner achievement but also in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the business processes.

Increasingly employers are saying that they need flexible and responsive training delivery in which online learning plays a significant role.

During this year Becta will be building its own expert capability in further education and skills, and at the same time invigorating its partnership working across the further education system.

We will also take action to further strengthen the evidence base on the impact of technology on attainment, responsiveness and organisational effectiveness.

We will be bringing in both business and further education sector experts to help shape our future strategy.

Like other parts of the education landscape we know that in the best colleges and learning providers we will find fantastic practice to match anything in the world.

But we know that it is not universal. We need to bring a sharper focus to tackling remaining barriers.

We are keen to invite views during this year to help us shape our programme.



# A new Becta

**Alan Cowie, Executive Director, Business Delivery and Organisational Development**

The new expanded leadership role has produced some far reaching changes for the organisation, and will have a dramatic effect on the way we work in the future.

The process of putting a new, strengthened, executive director structure in place started late last year, and was completed in April 2007. The new team has taken on extended responsibilities and will drive Becta forward.

Having got the executive team in place the next priority was to develop a more 'corporate' management team and to develop an effective planning process to enable us to deliver realistic objectives geared to the government's e-strategy.

The first phase in the development of a new staffing structure for a 'new Becta' has been completed and creates an expanded operational leadership team for Becta. This is the start of a process that will see Becta moving towards the leadership and performance-driven organisation we must become in order to deliver our new remit.

The new structure has been designed to reflect the way we must operate in the future and to underpin the supply, demand and policy areas of our work. It also reinforces the development of a strong corporate centre that will champion



**The next 12 months will be challenging for us, but I am confident that the people within the organisation will rise to this challenge, and that we are at the start of a very exciting period in Becta's history**

change, and puts strategic communication and engagement at the forefront of business activity.

Our second priority was to refine our planning process and quickly but effectively produce a realistic plan with achievable, but demanding, targets for the coming year. On pages six and seven of this document you will find details of our 2007–08 objectives.

It has been very pleasing to see the way Becta has applied itself to getting on with the job during a time of restructure, and the way the planning has been carried out epitomises the culture change that is taking place within the organisation.

Teams drawn from across all the functions within Becta have played a pivotal role in drawing up business plans to meet our new objectives, all of them working with the over-riding priority of focusing our attention on the needs of the learner and schools and colleges, making sure that Becta's work produces real benefits for them.

## My town is your town

Technology has helped pupils with severe learning difficulties to communicate with each other and enhance their learning in ways that would not have been possible with traditional classroom teaching.

Special needs consultants Norma Price and Lisa Brown worked on the My Town project with two teachers from Northern Ireland – Liam Kelly from Clifton Special School in Bangor and Marlene Young from Kilronan Special School in Magherafelt.

Together, they created a multi-media tourist guide of the other school's town. As part of this, pupils used online discussion tools within LearningNI, an online learning environment, to store and share documents, images, audio and video files that they had previously created.

They learned how to upload these files to the LearningNI discussion area so pupils

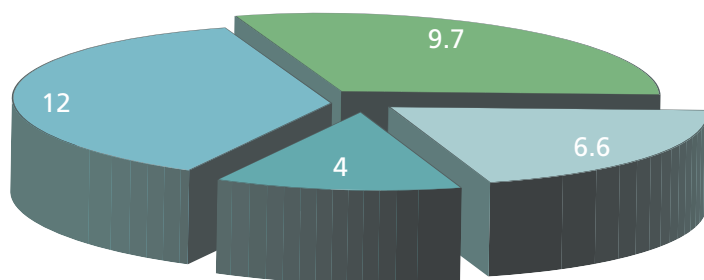
from the other school could access them. The pupils could then download the documents to their own computers, print them out or have them read aloud on the computer. Finally, the pupils used video-conferencing tools to share ideas about the project.

Through the project, the pupils developed knowledge and skills in planning, collecting, recording, presenting and interpreting information. The pupils also visited each other's school and toured the town they had studied virtually.

Norma Price commented: "The pupils were delighted to make new friends, and when the children from both schools met, there was no awkwardness – they had already interacted by video-conference!"

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Expenditure (£m)



- Advice and partnerships to deliver government e-strategy
- Development of IT expertise in schools and colleges
- Research and evaluation
- Development of national digital infrastructure

## Becta's finances

The principal funding for Becta is from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) with additional funding being received from other non departmental public bodies in the education sector.

The detail of expenditure during 2006–07 is shown left.

Please note that these figures are subject to revision as the auditing process is not yet complete.

Becta's full report and accounts will be published later this year.



Mark Dawe, principal of Oaklands College, St Albans, has a stark message for anyone who thinks that maintaining the status quo is an option in the modern educational arena:

“ At a recent staff meeting I explained to everyone that we had no choice other than to embrace the new technology. If we didn’t, they wouldn’t have a job in five years’ time. It wouldn’t be me putting them out of work, it would be the students. They would refuse to be taught in any other way. ”



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